Identifying the Nation's Wildland-Urban Interface Communities:
A Guide for State and Federal Land Managers

Please use the following steps to develop a complete list of the interface communities in your state. Once this list is established, please use the attached template to indicate which communities are in the vicinity of federal and/ or tribal lands, the categories of interface and risk to which they correspond, and whether or not a project is planned for implementation near that community in FY 2001.

OBJECTIVE: **To identify wildland-urban interface (WUI) communities across the nation and to indicate which communities are a) in the vicinity of federal lands and b) have a fuel / hazard reduction project planned for implementation in FY 2001.**

STEP ONE: DEFINE THE INTERFACE
The categories below are intended to help interagency teams clarify the conditions under which an "interface" situation exists. For the purposes of applying these categories and the subsequent criteria for evaluating risk to communities, a *structure* is understood to be either a residence or a business facility, including Federal, State, and local government facilities. Structures do not include small improvements such as fences and wildlife watering devices.

Category A. Interface Community
The Interface Community exists where structures directly abut wildland fuels. There is a clear line of demarcation between wildland fuels and residential, business, and public structures. Wildland fuels do not generally continue into the developed area. The development density for an interface community is usually 3 or more structures per acre, with shared municipal services. Fire protection is generally provided by a local fire department with the responsibility to protect the structure from both an interior fire and an advancing wildland fire.

Category B. Intermix Community
The Intermix Community exists where structures are scattered throughout a wildland area. There is no clear line of demarcation; wildland fuels are continuous outside of and within the developed area. The development density in the intermix ranges from structures very close together to one structure per 40 acres. Local fire departments and/or districts normally provide life and property fire protection and may also have wildland fire protection responsibilities.

Category C. Occluded Community
The Occluded Community generally exists in a situation, often within a city, where structures abut an island of wildland fuels (e.g., park or open space). There is a clear line of demarcation between structures and wildland fuels. The development density for an occluded community is usually similar to those found in the interface community, but the occluded area is usually less than 1,000 acres in size. Fire protection is normally provided by local fire departments.

STEP TWO: EVALUATE RISK TO COMMUNITIES
Not all structures and/ or communities that reside in an "interface" area are at significant risk from wildland fire. It is a combination of factors, including the composition and density of vegetative

fuels, extreme weather conditions, topography, density of structures, and response capability that determines the relative risk to an interface community. The criteria listed below are intended to assist interagency teams at the state level in identifying the communities within their jurisdiction that are at significant risk from wildland fire. The application of these risk factors to all lists submitted for the revised Federal Register publication should allow for greater nationwide consistency in determining the need and priorities for Federal projects and funding.

Risk Factor 1: Fire Behavior Potential

Situation 1: In these communities, continuous fuels are in close proximity to structures. The composition of surrounding fuels is conducive to crown fires or high intensity surface fires. Likely conditions include steep slopes, predominantly south aspects, dense fuels, heavy duff, prevailing wind exposure and/or ladder fuels that reduce fire fighting effectiveness. There is a history of large fires and/or high fire occurrence.

Situation 2: In these communities, intermittent fuels are in proximity to structures. Likely conditions include moderate slopes and/or rolling terrain, broken moderate fuels, and some ladder fuels. The composition of surrounding fuels is conducive to torching, spotting and/or moderate intensity surface fires. These conditions may lead to moderate fire fighting effectiveness. There is a history of some large fires and/or moderate fire occurrence.

Situation 3: In these communities, fine and/or sparse fuels surround structures. There is infrequent wind exposure and flat terrain to gently rolling terrain. The composition of surrounding fuels is conducive to low intensity surface fires. Fire fighting generally is highly effective. There is no large fire history and/or low fire occurrence.

Risk Factor 2: Risk to Social, Cultural and Community Resources

Situation 1: This situation most closely represents a community in an urban interface setting. The setting contains a high density of homes, businesses, and other facilities that continue across the interface. There is a lack of defensible space where personnel can safely work to provide protection. The community watershed for municipal water is at high risk of being burned compared to other watersheds within that geographic region. There is a high potential for economic loss to the community and likely loss of housing units and/or businesses. There are unique cultural, historical or natural heritage values at risk.

Situation 2: This situation represents an intermix or occluded setting, with scattered areas of high-density homes, summer homes, youth camps, or campgrounds that are less than a mile apart. Efforts to create defensible space or otherwise improve the fire-resistance of a landscape are intermittent. This situation would cover the presence of lands at risk that are described under state designations such as impaired watersheds~~,~~ or scenic byways. There is a risk of erosion or flooding in the community if vegetation burns.

Situation 3: This situation represents a generally occluded area characterized by dispersed single homes and other structures that are more than a mile apart. This situation may also include areas where efforts to create a more fire-resistant landscape have been implemented on a large scale throughout a community or surrounding watershed.

Risk Factor 3: Fire Protection Capability
Situation 1: In these communities, there are narrow dead end roads, steep grades, and/or one way access roads. There is no, or minimal, fire fighting capacity, no fire hydrants, no surface water, no pressure water systems, no emergency response capability, and no evacuation plan in an area surrounded by a fire-conducive landscape.

Situation 2: In these communities, there are limited access routes, moderate grades, limited water supply, and limited fire fighting capability in an area surrounded by scattered fire-conducive landscape.

Situation 3: In these communities, there are multiple entrances and exits that are well equipped for fire trucks, wide loop roads, fire hydrants, open water sources (pools, creeks, lakes), established emergency response resources, and an evacuation plan in place in an area surrounded by a fireproof landscape.

STEP THREE: INCORPORATE EXISTING INTERAGENCY ANALYSES
Many States, Tribes and local governments have already developed sophisticated mapping and risk assessment processes to identify and prioritize the interface communities within their jurisdictions. In addition, local land managers and land owners often possess unique knowledge regarding a wildland area and associated structures that allows them to more accurately assess the area's risk to wildfire. These existing efforts should ~~also~~ be considered when revising individual interface community lists.

STEP FOUR: IDENTIFY ONGOING OR PLANNED PROJECTS
The direction provided in the FY 2001 Appropriations Bill requires that the revised lists published in the Federal Register identify those communities that are associated with an ongoing or planned hazard reduction project during the current fiscal year. Please use the accompanying template to indicate where projects to be implemented in FY 2001 correspond to communities on your revised list.

STEP FIVE: IDENTIFY AREAS FOR OUT-YEAR ACTION (FY 2002 AND BEYOND)
The FY 2001 Appropriations Bill also requests that Federal Agencies explain why not all communities on their lists have associated projects or planned treatments. Interagency teams in each state are asked to assist in responding to this request by indicating any known projects that are due to begin either planning or implementation phases in FY 2002 or 2003.

STEP SIX: SUBMIT LIST THROUGH STATE FORESTER OR EQUIVALENT
Final revised lists should be submitted by the State Forester or equivalent State official using the template provided at ftp://ftp.nifc.blm.gov/WUI/. Any relevant documentation and/or explanatory narratives that help clarify the list will be appreciated.